La Prise de la Bastille

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La Prise de la Bastille

by Jana_Valker

Summary

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité. And Ryuuko learns something new about her sister, and the world she didn't get to see.

Notes

Each year, I take a moment to just stop and appreciate the fourteenth of July. This year, I also wanted to write something about it. This takes place in the multi-part story I am currently working on.

La Prise de la Bastille

Ryuuko woke up to the sound of somebody's singing. She felt like her head was in a water bubble, the echoes wailing right and left, and she couldn't grasp on the words, but the voice seemed familiar.

"Sis," she said as she stood up on her side, "do you have any idea what time it-" she fumbled to look at the alarm, which displayed its 11:37 reading like a red mockery, "-is..."

Well, nevermind then. Ryuuko rubbed her eyes, groaned and took a pair of pants and a shirt to put on. She went downstairs to the sound of Satsuki's singing, and she stopped about halfway when she saw Satsuki, wearing only a pair of short and strolling around the room pumping her fist up the air. Satsuki turned, smiled, and she went up to the stairs to meet her, still singing something that Ryuuko didn't understand.

"Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira, Le peuple en ce jour sans cesse répète, Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira," she said, and she embraced Ryuuko, taking her left fist with her own and pumping it up in the air once again. Ryuuko laughed at Satsuki's behaviour; it felt good to see her sis in such a happy mood.

"I thought we had an agreement on that 'sniffing tea' stuff, sis," Ryuuko said when Satsuki let go of her hand.

"I can stop whenever I want," she replied, then put her hand on Ryuuko's shoulder. "You should get ready. We are going out for breakfast today."

"What if somebody comes," Ryuuko said, looking down at the studio, where piles upon piles of white origami stood on her sister's desk, and surrounded it as some sort of alien flora.

"Today it doesn't matter. I want you to be there with us."

"Is somebody else coming? Should I get Mako?"

Satsuki's forehead creased.

"My friends are, and I would appreciate if we'd keep this between ourselves. Just wait and see."

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Fifteen minutes later, and Ryuuko had exchanged her blanket on the bed for the blanket of hot air in the middle of the streets. Luckily they were in the city's outskirts, and there were a few trees and bushes here and there to chase the heatwaves away. Her sister, on the other hand, didn't seem bothered by heat. She had a thin smile on her lips and a bounce to her step

that Ryuuko had rarely seen ever since they begun living together. From time to time, Satsuki hummed a bit of the tune Ryuuko heard her singing before, but she didn't say the words out loud. Ryuuko didn't feel like starting a conversation, though.

After a few more turns, they arrived at a small junction, and on the other end of the street Ryuuko saw the whole gang in fronto a nice-looking coffee-bar; the first to spot was of course Gamagoori, dressed in white, busy drying his face with a handkerchief that in his hands looked small, but Ryuuko guessed it was more the size of a towel. Inumuta was typing something on his handheld, Sanageyama looked around the street, and Nonon was, Ryuuko guessed, being generally annoying.

"Satsuki," she was the first to greet her, and she run across the road to hug her. Satsuki hugged her back, and Ryuuko took a moment of her time to check if the little pink snake was moving her coils a bit too close to her sister. Looks like she didn't. Good.

"Thank you for being here, Jakuzure. I hope this didn't impede your job too much."

"I have subordinates," Nonon said with sufficiency, "they can handle it," then she looked at Ryuuko.

"Hey," she said. Nonon just floated closer to Satsuki.

"Did you invite her too?"

"She has the right to know," Satsuki said in a tone that carried a final note with it. The little pink blob nodded and detached her suckers from her sister.

"As long as she doesn't break anything," she muttered under her breath, but Ryuuko heard it loud and clear. She was about to speak a retort that would put the blob back into her place when Satsuki touched her shoulder. It was a feather's touch. Satsuki's eyes pleaded for a peaceful morning. Ryuuko scoffed and put her hands in her pockets. What you don't do for family.

The rest of the former Elite Four greeted Satsuki while they came in, and for a moment, she felt left out; then Satsuki turned her head and looked at her with another smile, and she felt thawing in her heart. She followed the others inside - she couldn't understand much of what they were talking about, given how quickly and loud they were going at it, anyway. Wait and see, she said.

Satsuki sat down at a large table in the middle of the bar; it was wooden, polished to the point Ryuuko could see a hint of her reflection in the mahogany, and as she took her place next to her sister, she also saw Soroi taking his place at the table.

"Sorry to make you wait," he excused himself, " traffic was horrible." He had took off that orange mask of his, and he looked at Ryuuko with a surprised expression for a moment, then tried a welcoming smile. Ryuuko didn't know him well, but she liked his manners, so she nodded.

A few drinks were ordered, mostly tea, though Ryuuko also had a few pancakes with it. Words were exchanged, and she noticed that Satsuki, though from time to time looked at her and smiled, and seemed to praise her patience, never made an effort to introduce her in the conversations. Not that she was that much interested in knowing how well was Gamagoori's new smith shop going, or the planned future of Northern Kanto gangs, so zoned in an out, taking a few looks around - the bar was empty save for their group, and she could bask in the polished wood and copper lining that gave the interior a warm, cozy atmosphere. It was a nice bar, and the light was nice, and the tea was nice, though not as nice as when her sister made it. If only she'd understand what all this was about.

After a few more confusing minutes, Satsuki, who had spoken very little, started humming that odd tune again. The voices around her fell down like dead leaves, one by one, and in the silence that followed, she started to sing. This time Ryuuko wasn't choke full of sleep, so she could appreciate the way Satsuki's voice sounded like echoes of metal on glass, so pure, and refined, that she imagined the copper lining would purr. It was the kind of voice that made her want to do things.

"Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Le peuple en ce jour sans cesse répète,
Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates on les pendra !"

She stopped just for Nonon to take it up; her nasal voice was quite a contrast to Satsuki's.

"Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira !
Les aristocrates à la lanterne.
Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira !
Les aristocrates on les pendra."

Then Gamagoori came in, with his basso that made the teacups tinkle.

"Si on n' les pend pas
On les rompra
Si on n' les rompt pas
On les brûlera.
Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,"

Ryuuko couldn't get a grasp on the words - it sounded French? - but it was a nice tune. When she looked down at the table, her fingers had already began tapping with its rhythm.

"Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Nous n'avons plus ni nobles, ni prêtres,
Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
L'égalité partout régnera,"

Sang Inumuta, with less skill than Satsuki and less warmth than Gamagoori. Still, Ryuuko's fingers never left the table.

"L'esclave autrichien le suivra,
Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Et leur infernale clique
Au diable s'envolera,"

Followed Sanageyama, and at last, Soroi:

"Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates à la lanterne ;
Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates on les pendra,"

with a voice that surprised Ryuuko with its strength, and finally, Satsuki raised her fist in the air like she did this morning, and completed with:

"Et quand on les aura tous pendus,
On leur fichera la pelle au cul!"

Her friends all raised a fist to the two lines, and Ryuuko, still a bit confused did the same, though both her fist and her 'yeah' came a bit later than the others.

"Thank you," Said Satsuki after a moment, when all the hands where back on the table, "for coming back here once again. It's for the benefit of all of us to remember a time when people, tired of being treated as cattle by tyranny, stood up and with little more than pitchforks, guns and faith overthrew the old rule, for the benefit of us all. I'm just glad we're here, today, all together, and we also see that the aftermath of our revolution wasn't that hideous, though," and she looked at Ryuuko, "there have been losses."

Ryuuko nodded once, though she still didn't understand the meaning of this. So they reunited at this bar to sang a catchy tune and talk a bit? Was that it?

"For those of us who weren't there the first times, I'd like now to explain that today we come here to spend a little time together, just like we were normal people. It's our carnival, when roles are reversed and we could, we can, actually sing a song to remind us that oppression isn't for ever, just like it wasn't for millions of French farmers, two centuries ago."

Wait...

"Once a year, in the amber light of this room, I liked to remind our little group of sanculottes that there were people who fought before us, and we can fight our own revolutions because they won theirs. Mother never knew about this place, though the last year we didn't exactly... have time to come here. So thank you, everybody."

There was silence for a moment, then conversation resumed once again, little by little, like a jar filling up with murmuring water. Ryuuko said nothing, and Satsuki was left alone by the crowd. They stood together, listening, no words exchanged, for a while.

"How many years," asked Ryuuko then.

"Seven. At first it was just me and Nonon and Soroi, but the group grew with time. It felt good. I wanted you to wait and see first..."

Ryuuko nodded.

"Well," she said after a while, looking for Satsuki's eyes with hers, "it looks like I have one whole year to learn how to speak French."

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